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## Text of the U.S. Statement On Presence of Spy Plane

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 5 — Following is the text of a statement read to reporters today at the White House about the presence of a United States reconnaissance plane in the vicinity of a South Korean airliner that was later downed:

A U.S. RC-135 aircraft was in the vicinity of the Korean airliner on Aug. 31 when the airliner was initially detected by Soviet radar. Both aircraft were then in international airspace, and the U.S. aircraft never entered Soviet airspace. The U.S. routinely conducts unarmed RC-135 flights in international airspace off the Kamchatka Peninsula to monitor by technical means Soviet compliance with the SALT treaties. The Soviets conduct similar monitoring activities near U.S. missile-testing areas. The Soviets are aware of our flights and track them routinely. They know that our aircraft do not enter their airspace. The Korean aircraft's inadvertent entry into Soviet territory should have been an early and strong indication to them that the flight was not a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft.

The Soviets traced the Korean aircraft and the U.S. aircraft separately and knew there were two aircraft in the area, so we do not think this was a case of mistaken identity. The closest point of approach was approximately 75 nautical miles, while the U.S. aircraft was in its mission orbit. Later the U.S. aircraft crossed the path taken by the Korean airliner, but by then the airliner was almost 300 miles away. Still later, as the Korean airliner strayed off course and overflew Kamchatka Peninsula, it was initially identified by the Soviets as an RC-135 and then as an unidentified aircraft. Approximately two and a half hours after the the U.S. and Korean aircraft were near each other in international space, the Soviets shot down the Korean airliner as it was ex-

iting (or had exited) their territory west of Sakhalin Island, some 1,000 miles from the operating area of the U.S. aircraft.

### Ground and Air Radar

During the two and one half hours of Soviet surveillance of the Korean aircraft, the Soviets had radar images (both ground and air) of the Korean 747. The two aircraft are distinctly different in shape and size. Their fighter aircraft also had visual contact with the Korean aircraft. The SU-15 and MIG-23 aircraft pilots whose voices are on the tape obtained by the U.S. and played for the Congressional leadership never refer to the Korean aircraft as an RC-135, only as the "target." They made no serious effort to identify the aircraft or to warn it. They did not appear to care what it was. Instead, they were intent on killing it. If the Soviets made a mistake in identification, which stretches the imagination, they have not said so to date. In fact, they have not to date admitted shooting down the Korean commercial aircraft with 269 people aboard. We continue to ask the Soviets for their full accounting of this incident.

The presence of a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft on a routine monitoring mission to assure Soviet compliance with treaty obligations some 1,000 miles and two and half hours flight time from the scene of the shootdown in no way excuses or explains this act, which speaks for itself. In fact, the RC-135 in question, at the time KAL 7 was shot down, had been on the ground at its home base in Alaska for more than one hour.